



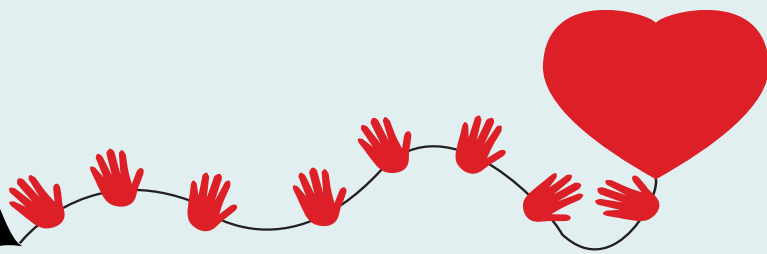
Maricopa County CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 1

www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/juvenile/casa/Casa.html

March 2003



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 13, 12 p.m.-1:30 p.m.**

Brown Bag Lunch with Judge Scott
Southeast Juvenile Court Complex
Yucca Room

- **March 14-15, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Orientation Training Weekend
Arizona Supreme Court Building

- **March 20, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.**

Post Orientation Training
Durango Juvenile Court Complex
Juvenile Probation Building Room 223

- **March 29, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.**

Values Options Training
Arizona Supreme Court Building

Some of our dates on our training calendar needed to be amended:

- **April 3, (from April 5) 4:30 p.m.**

Light of Hope Event
Downtown Court Plaza

- **June 27 (from June 26), 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

Advocacy Training
Southeast Juvenile Court Complex, Saguaro Room

Family Drug Court aims to treat parent, protect child

Following months of planning, Maricopa County Superior Court's Family Drug Treatment Court (FDTC) will soon become a reality. It is a collaboration between the Superior Court, substance abuse treatment providers, and social service providers, that will serve parents involved in the Family Court disputes and in Juvenile Court dependency cases.

Funding for the project has been made through the Governor's Office and the federal government.

The mission of the FDTC is to provide coordinated judicial and community substance abuse treatment that creates stability and permanency for children in a timely manner. Although this is a court for adults, the protection and nurturing of children is always emphasized. Parents whose children are the subject of a dependency petition must

volunteer to participate in the FDTC. Their successful participation could lead to reunification with their children. By supporting a parent's journey to sobriety, the health and safety of his or her children is enhanced.

CASAs may be interested in learning how the parent progresses in this specialized court in order to determine if family reunification is a worthwhile case plan. CASAs may benefit by understanding the kinds of supervision, treatment, and jurisprudence parents receive in this program. We encourage CASAs to take advantage of every opportunity to understand all the interventions that impact the family so that a well-informed recommendation about the child's permanent case plan can be rendered to the court.

Program participants are rewarded for attaining estab-

lished treatment goals. Non-compliance is also addressed via consequences. Treatment planning, counseling, drug and alcohol testing, self-help groups, detoxification, and residential treatment are examples of services offered through the program. Graduates of FDTC will be inducted into an alumni association and will receive aftercare services.

Judge Carey Hyatt, located in the East Court Building in downtown Phoenix, will preside over the hearings. Initially, the court is reviewing dependency cases currently assigned to the downtown dependency calendars, to determine which cases might benefit by inclusion in the FDTC.

Once a case is transferred to Judge Hyatt, she will conduct all future dependency hearings as well as FDTC hearings, which may be attended by CASAs.

Q&A from Judge Linda Scott

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge



Q From Joe Orlando: Do Judges ever sever the rights of one parent and not the other if the parents are still married (maybe not living together), or do they need to be divorced?

A Although this scenario is unlikely, it could happen. There is no statutory requirement that parental rights be severed on both parents or that parents be divorced if severance is only requested against one of the parents. There are two issues to consider. The

first issue is whether there is a statutory ground to sever a parent's parental rights. There are cases where CPS can establish a ground for termination of parental rights as to one parent but not the other.

The second issue is the child's best interests. If the child is in an adoptive home, parental rights need to be severed on both parents or the child is not free for adoption. If the child is older and

adoption is not feasible or appropriate, there may not be any advantage to termination of parental rights. Another example is where one parent is working the case plan and making good progress toward reunification, CPS typically will not take the time or incur the expense to sever the other parent's parental rights. The expectation is that the parent who progresses enough to regain custody of the child and achieve dismissal of the

Continued Page 3

Get to Know Marshall Porter

How long have you been a CASA?

I have been a CASA for almost four years, and I have had the same case for the entire time. My CASA child is 12 years old and she has faced many challenges in the four years she has been in the foster care system. The six different placements and seven different schools may not be unique for foster children but it is still unacceptable and painful to the child.

What got you interested in CASA?

I was referred to CASA by a person with whom I served on the Board of Directors for Touchstone Behavioral Health.

I have been involved

with non-profit boards since the early 1990's. About a year ago I ac-

cepted an appointment to the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency and I have served for the past four years on the Paradise Valley School District Human Resources Diversity Council.

It is interesting to note that through all of the boards and commissions I have served on, I have gained insight and perspective on how the system works, and I can see the links and patterns between them and the service to children. All have increased my knowledge and understanding.



You're involved in minority issues, on your boards, and at the National CASA level.

I have seen that many issues faced by foster children in general are often amplified for minority children. For example, my CASA child. Any school or situation she goes into, she will be a minority, either by her ethnicity or by her status as a foster child, and they each have their own issues.

Self esteem, confidence and the ability to adapt is key.

I have been on the National CASA Board of Directors less than a year and serve on the African American Advisory Committee, the Diversity committee and the Nominations committee.

The Advisory committee has been focusing on recruitment and retention of African

American volunteers and staff across the country. The National CASA Board and the diversity committee grapple with the challenge of living in a multicultural society with varying backgrounds, and providing for the needs of abused and neglected children who need a CASA."

What advice would you give new CASAs?

"Your success as a CASA is based on your ability to partner with all of the stakeholders involved with your child; that includes the case manager, the child's therapists, and school personnel. Each of them has a stake in the success of the child.

It is not always possible to avoid bumping heads, but you have to remember who, ultimately, needs to be served, and that is the child."

CASA Kudos

The Foster Care Review Board commended the following CASAs for their continued dedication to the children on their cases:

- Linda Warfield
- Flo Smithiger
- Carole Kempton
- Diane Renne
- Lynda Jo Taylor
- Terry Doeppen
- Ellen Smith
- Kenneth Pollock
- James Lee
- Tawnya Smith
- Alan Coffey
- Kathy Froggatt
- Randi Hoefer
- D. Anne Stehr
- Deborah Donofrio
- Brenda Cox

From the Court:

• Judge William Sargeant commended CASA, **Judith Pierce**, on her excellent report.

- Judge Thomas Dunevant

commended CoCASAs, **Toni Schulte** and **Bob Herrman**, and is "very appreciative of all the work and effort on behalf of the children."

- Commissioner Steven Holding commended CASA, **Amy Besing**, for her "CASA report received and noted. Please convey my thank you to the CASA for her very complete and thorough report."

From CPS:

- Case Manager, Paula Hayward, commended CASA **K.C. Gill**, calling the CASA office to state that she is glad that K.C. is a CASA, that she is a pleasure to work with and that if there are any awards to be given to CASAs, K.C. should get one.

From the CASA Office:

- **Betti Simpson** had a birthday in December, and at her birthday party, instead of gifts for her, she asked that

her guests bring gifts for CASA children. She donated the gifts to Arizona Council for CASA.

- We started the year 2002 with 220 total volunteers and finished the year with close to 275 total volunteers. What a recruiting Kudo and milestone for our recruiter, now **Mrs. LaDonna Benner**.

From LaDonna:

- Ellen Smith for keeping the Paradise Valley Library stocked with CASA brochures and bookmarks.
- Toni Schulte for bringing in two Sun City newspapers for us to send CASA recruitment information to.
- Marshall Porter for his participation on the National CASA African-American Advisory Committee.
- Gene Lambert for taking CASA information to the tribal meeting.

Peer Group Meetings

Scottsdale — 1:30 p.m.
Last Wednesday Of each month. April date changed to April 23.
Home of Mary Lou Davis

East Valley — 6:30 p.m.
Third Tuesday of each month.
Home of Joe & Vicky Orlando

Central Phoenix — 6:30 p.m.
Third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm.
Home of Marcia Rysdon.

West Valley — 6:30 p.m.
Fourth Thursday of each month Home of Donna Spence

Please call the main CASA office – 602.506.4083 – for peer group host phone numbers.

Coordinator's Corner

By Leslie Blakely



Many of our CASA kids are faced with a "Catch 22" situation involving education and self-esteem. These kids fall behind in school and their self-esteem suffers. When their self-esteem suffers, they are not motivated to achieve in school. So they fall behind ... and so it goes. CASA volunteers can intervene to, here again, "make a difference." What is this intervention? - Serving as a Surrogate Parent for your CASA child. What is a Surrogate Parent?

The Arizona Department of Education provides the definition: A Surrogate Parent is appointed by the Court to represent the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child. A Surrogate Parent will be asked to:

- Give or refuse consent for the initial evaluation, reevaluation, and initial placement of the child in special education, or "special ed" for short.
- Review all educational records and reports relating to the child.
- Participate and contribute in the child's evaluation, eligibility determination, and special ed placement.
- Participate in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process by providing input to develop, review, or revise a child's special ed program.
- Monitor the child's educa-

tional progress during the school year to see if the IEP goals are being met and that the services listed on the IEP are appropriately meeting the child's needs.

A petition for the appointment of a surrogate parent for a child with a disability shall be made to the Court if any of the following conditions exist:

- No parent can be identified.
- A public agency cannot determine the whereabouts of a parent, after having made three documented and reasonable attempts.
- The child is a ward of the State.

You may be thinking your CASA child isn't "disabled". But, you might be surprised. A child is considered to be disabled if one or more of the following conditions exist: Autism, Emotional Disability, Hearing Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, Severe Sensory Impairment, Mental Retardation, Orthopedic Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech/Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment, Other Health Impairments. A child may not be determined eligible if the greatest factor is a lack of instruction in reading, math, or in the case of limited English proficiency. An

evaluation will determine if a child is considered disabled. The goal of education is to help develop students into contributing citizens of society. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all children could grow into contributing citizens? - Good for society - good for the "self." Most children in our society are fortunate enough to have parents or a parent who will serve their best interests, and certainly education is "bed rock" in serving "best interests." However, most times the children that CASA's serve do not have a parent to oversee their best interests. These children, most of who have suffered the additional shocks of abuse or neglect in their birth homes, have remained invisible and underserved within the world of education. Statistics prove that foster children have higher rates of grade retention, lower academic skills as measured by standardized tests, higher absentee and

tardy rates, and higher dropout rates. (Casey Family Programs, 2002.) It may be up to the CASA to ensure that a dependent child in our population of children gets the support needed to gain the education that contributes to self-esteem and the confidence to become a contributing member of society. To get more information on how to be trained as a surrogate parent, call Grizelda Valenzuela, Special Education Consultant with the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, at 480.893.9216. The training lasts three to six hours, and can be applied toward your annual CASA Program training requirement of 12 hours. You will be asked to pass a Class One fingerprint check. Yes, even though you've already been fingerprinted by the CASA Program. Give this some thought; you might be able to make an even bigger difference!

Save the Dates!

• *Light of Hope Event*

4:30 p.m., April 3.

• *Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, 6 p.m. April 26, Phoenix Airport Marriott*

Please note that the Second Annual Light of Hope Event has been changed to Thursday, April 3, 2003. We will have a candlelight vigil at the downtown court plaza and invite the public and media to attend. This is also an **"Each**

One, Reach One" event, so please make sure you bring a friend. Keep an eye out for detailed flyers, which will arrive in your mailboxes soon. April, National Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month, is also a month we use to thank our volunteers. Mark your calendars for an evening of inspiration and fun at our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. Thanks to all of you.

See you there!

Judge Scott, From Page 1

dependency will be able to protect the child from any harmful contact with the other parent. This is the reason that judges want to see Family Court custody orders entered before they agree to dismiss a

dependency.

Another example where it may be best to not sever parental rights is when contact with a parent is beneficial to the child even though it is not appropriate to return the child to that parent (for example the child has

severe behavior problems that the parent is unable to manage but there is a good bond between the child and parent).

The real issue: is a continuing relationship with one parent in the child's best interest even if the other

parent's rights are terminated? The answer will vary depending on the unique facts of each case.

As a practical matter CPS does not seek to terminate parents rights in most cases unless adoption is the case plan.

CASA Contacts and Information

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